

## ABSTRACT

The invention is directed to a method of diagnosing a cell proliferative disorder of breast tissue by determining the methylation status of nucleic acids obtained from a subject. Aberrant methylation of several genes including TWIST, HOXA5, NES-1, retinoic acid receptor beta (RAR $\beta$ ), estrogen receptor (ER), cyclin D2, WT-1, 14.3.3 sigma, and combinations of such genes serve as markers of breast malignancy.

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